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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9214  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2614  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1013  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1913  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2073  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2726  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 2734  
RUEHBD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0868  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 001105

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: KEY MUSLIM LEADER DENOUNCES EXTREMIST VIOLENCE

REF: A. JAKARTA 1076

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 888

[1](#)C. JAKARTA 939

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires John Heffern, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On June 2, Charge met Din Syamsuddin, Chair of Muhammadiyah, the country's second largest Muslim organization. They discussed repercussions of the recent attack by extremist groups on a pro-pluralism demonstration. Syamsuddin denounced the violence. They also discussed the climate for religious freedom, the recent rise of an Islamic political party and prospects for Indonesia's future. CDA urged Syamsuddin to speak out for religious freedom. END SUMMARY

#### EXTREMIST ATTACK

[1](#)2. (C) Syamsuddin denounced the June 1 attack on a peaceful rally by members of the Islamic Defender's Front (FPI) (ref A). He said Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's second largest Muslim organization with about 30 million members, is always willing to extend a hand to any Islamic group until that point when it engages in violence. He went on to call for the banning of the FPI. Syamsuddin called President Yudhoyono's public statement made earlier that day "weak," and said condemning lack of action by police and the actions taken by perpetrators was not enough. (Note: Per reftels, the GOI is looking into whether to ban the group. Police arrested roughly 100 members of the group on June 4.)

[1](#)3. (C) "Violence against innocent people, particularly women and children, goes against the teachings of Islam," he added. He called on Muslim groups to work together to pressure the GOI to take positive action to ensure the right of free expression.

#### BANNING AN ISLAMIC SECT?

[1](#)4. (C) Syamsuddin told CDA that he did not support a ban on the Ahmadiyah sect. He added this caveat: the GOI had some responsibility to issue restrictions on certain "social aspects" of the group. He said the recommendation by the

Indonesian Council of Ulemas (MUI), the country's highest authority on Islam, to ban the Islamic sect Ahmadiyah, was likely contributing to the escalating violence. He added that the current political climate and rise of hardline extremist groups was putting pressure on Yudhoyono to act. (Note: Presidential Advisor Adnan Buyung Nasution told CDA on May 28 that the GOI would not ban the sect, but would issue some sort of decree containing guidelines on how to steer the sect to "the correct path" of Islam. He also said Yudhoyono was very concerned about his public image and feared the GOI would "lose face" with the Indonesian public if the GOI backed off completely from issuing a decree on Ahmadiyah.)

#### ISLAMIC PARTY ON THE RISE

15. (C) Syamsuddin said he had a very close relationship with the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), a fast emerging Islamic party which recently won two key gubernatorial elections. He related that he gave a toast at Hidayat Nur Wahid's recent wedding, which is a special honor. (Note: Nur Wahid is the former head of PKS and current Chair of the People's Consultative Assembly. He is considered a viable vice presidential candidate in the 2009 elections.)

16. (C) Syamsuddin did not think the party's momentum would continue. He said the PKS is limited in its capability and experience, particularly as most of its leaders are very young--PKS members tend to be aged 20-40. It is an exclusive party (i.e. strictly Islamic) which has gained support by campaigning as a young and clean party. (ref C). He said he saw its success more as a failure of the other major parties and as a no-confidence vote for the status quo. "They are at their peak and will not exceed 10 percent of the vote" in

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2009's national legislative elections, he asserted.

#### ON INDONESIA

17. (C) The future of Indonesia lies in uniting the country's moderate Islamic parties to counter the rise of extremism, he said. Syamsuddin was very critical of the U.S.'s "war on terror" saying it was "anti-Islamic," mired in generalizations, and had stigmatized the entire Muslim world. He also said Indonesia's prospects for success were hampered by an inherent inferiority complex, coupled with rising poverty and weak infrastructure. Fighting against the "war on terror" was a self-defense mechanism. However, Indonesia needed a strategy for the future--a strategy of cooperation.

18. (C) CDA reiterated the U.S. commitment to continue working closely with the GOI and other Muslim-majority countries. He encouraged Syamsuddin to take a more forceful public stance against groups attempting to suppress freedom of religion.

HEFFERN